Department of Rehabilitation Services
67 Prospect Avenue, 3rd Floor
Hartford, CT 06106-2980

Advisory Board Meeting: June 10, 2013
Minutes

Members in Attendance:
Luisa Soboleski, Board Chairperson
Raymond DeRosa, Parent of student enrolled in public school
Kathy Britos-Swain, Designee, Department of Public Health
Mary Lynch, Hard of Hearing Member, Office of State Comptroller
Len Erazmus, Designee, Department of Social Services
Colleen Hayles, Designee, Department of Education
Mary Silvestri, Deaf Member

Members Not Present:
Edward Peltier, Executive Director, American School for the Deaf, Ex-Officio Member
William Rivera, Designee, Department of Children & Families
Lucy Trusock, Parent of student enrolled at ASD
Sandra McGee, President of CCOSD, Ex-Officio Member
Gloria White, Deaf Member
Matt Ranelli, Parent of student in oral education program
Bernice Zampano, Designee, Department of Labor
Jane Whitehead, Designee, Department of Developmental Services

Vacant Positions:
Designee from DMHAS
Consultant for Hearing Impaired Programs, Ex-Officio
Otolaryngologist licensed to practice in the State of Connecticut
Deaf / Hard of Hearing Member
Deaf / Hard of Hearing Member

BRS/CDHI Staff Present:
Amy Porter, Commissioner
Sara Gerhold, Interpreter Coordinator

Guests Present:
Harvey Corson, Mike Fiorno

Interpreters:
Cindy Ward and Pam Crawford

CART Reporter:
Diana Huntington

Call to Order, Acceptance of Agenda, Minutes and Adjournment Time:

Luisa Soboleski called meeting to order at 1:47. Acceptance of the agenda. There was no meeting in February of 2013, and no quorum at the meeting in April of 2013; therefore, no need to approve the minutes. November 2012 minutes were discussed and accepted.

DORS Report

Amy Porter presented a department update. The only staffing change since the last meeting is the hiring of an Office Assistant in the Interpreting Unit. Jackie Medina is our new Office Assistant, bringing the staffing level back to full strength. She also reported on the state budget, which passed last week. There are no changes to the level of financial support for deaf and hard of hearing services within DORS. This is significant, as there were cuts to other programs, including Employment Opportunities and an account that provides reimbursement for school districts that hire their own teachers for students who are blind or visually impaired.

Interpreting Unit Report: Sara provided a status update on the Interpreting Unit. She indicated that there have been three interpreters who have left in the last quarter - one that retired, and two that moved out of state. There are currently 42 active interpreters on staff. She provided the attached charts (ATTACH SARA'S REPORT), covering interpreting service statistics by region, by request method, by assigned hours, by types of customers, by lead time to fill assignment.

Counseling Unit Report: The counselors were not present at the meeting. Amy will follow up with them to be sure they are prepared to attend the September meeting.

Unfinished Business

Harvey Corson wanted to commend DORS and the Interpreting Unit for raising the need for interpreters at emergency press briefings. He indicated that this was a very positive change, and it will be featured on the front page of CAD's spring newsletter. Harvey also shared information from the Task Force established by CRID to modernize interpreter laws in Connecticut. He indicated that many of the changes are necessary to keep current with changes at the national level, such as the requirement that new interpreters have a bachelors degree. He indicated that a meeting is anticipated this summer with members of the Task Force, Cathy Abercrombie, chair of the Human Services committee, and Amy Porter, Commissioner of DORS. Harvey also wanted to share that there continues to be concerns in the deaf community about deaf services within DORS. He and Sue Pederson presented at the LOB during a public hearing, testifying that they believed deaf and hard of hearing services should be given Bureau status with its own program leader.

New Business

Luisa raised the question about expectations of the Board, and a healthy discussion followed. One area of agreement was the idea that the Board focus on DORS as a clearinghouse for deaf and hard of hearing resources. To move this to action, Luisa will share an old resource document with Amy to scan and share with the group. Board members will review the document over the summer and identify additional resources and content areas we want to cover.

Mary L. raised a question about membership. The Board membership is legislated, but there is some concern that the identified representatives are from outdated categories. Amy will scan the membership requirements and share with Mary. Board members will review the legislated areas and make suggestions to Mary, who will compile the feedback and make recommendations for legislative wording changes at the September meeting. Also, if members identify individuals who might be interested in the work of the Board, they can always be invited as guests to the meetings and get

involved in activities and planning. They just would not be able to vote unless appointed by the Governor.

At the September meeting, the Board will continue to map out the strategic areas that it wants to focus on. Board members should be thinking about the areas that they want to see as priorities.
Mary S. will work on the by-laws, looking at recommendations for simplifying and modernizing our existing by-laws.

Announcements
Mary Sylvestre shared three announcements. First, CAD continues to be involved in the issue of captioned movies. The Danbury Movie Theatre has 3 captioned movies daily. Second ASL is now considered a world language in public schools. ASD teachers don't need to be certified, but they need to meet specific qualifications. There are not a lot of ASL qualified teachers at this point. Finally, there is a meeting this Thursday on the Language and Communication Plan where teachers of the deaf and hard of hearing are meeting with Soundbridge.

Adjournment
Meeting adjourned at 3:15 p.m.

Next Meeting
September 9, 2013